DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 106 898 EA 007 023

AUTHOR	Barr, Robert D.
TITLE	The Growth of Alternative Public Schools: The 1975 ICOPE Report.
INSTITUTION	Indiana Univ., Bloomington. School of Education.; International Consortium for Options in Public Education, Bloomington, Ind.
PUB DATE	75
NOTE	17p.; A related document is ED 100 041; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for Options in Public Education, School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 ($1.00)
JOURNAL CIT	Changing Schools: An Occasional Newsletter on Alternative Public Schools; V3:4 no12 1975
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Alternative Schools; *Educational Alternatives; Elementary Secondary Education; *Newsletters; *Open Education

ABSTRACT

This newsletter reports the growth of alternative schools from 1973 when 464 alternative public schools in 36 states were identified to 1975 when 1,250 such schools can be listed. Charts illustrate the growth distributed by states. The reasons for growth are presented as publications, professional recommendations, accreditation procedures, state departments of education, mandated optional schools, federal and foundation support, technical assistance, and teacher education programs. Short reports from alternative schools in various states conclude the newsletter. (DW)

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changing schools

An Occasional Newsletter on Alternative Public Schools

3:4, 1975

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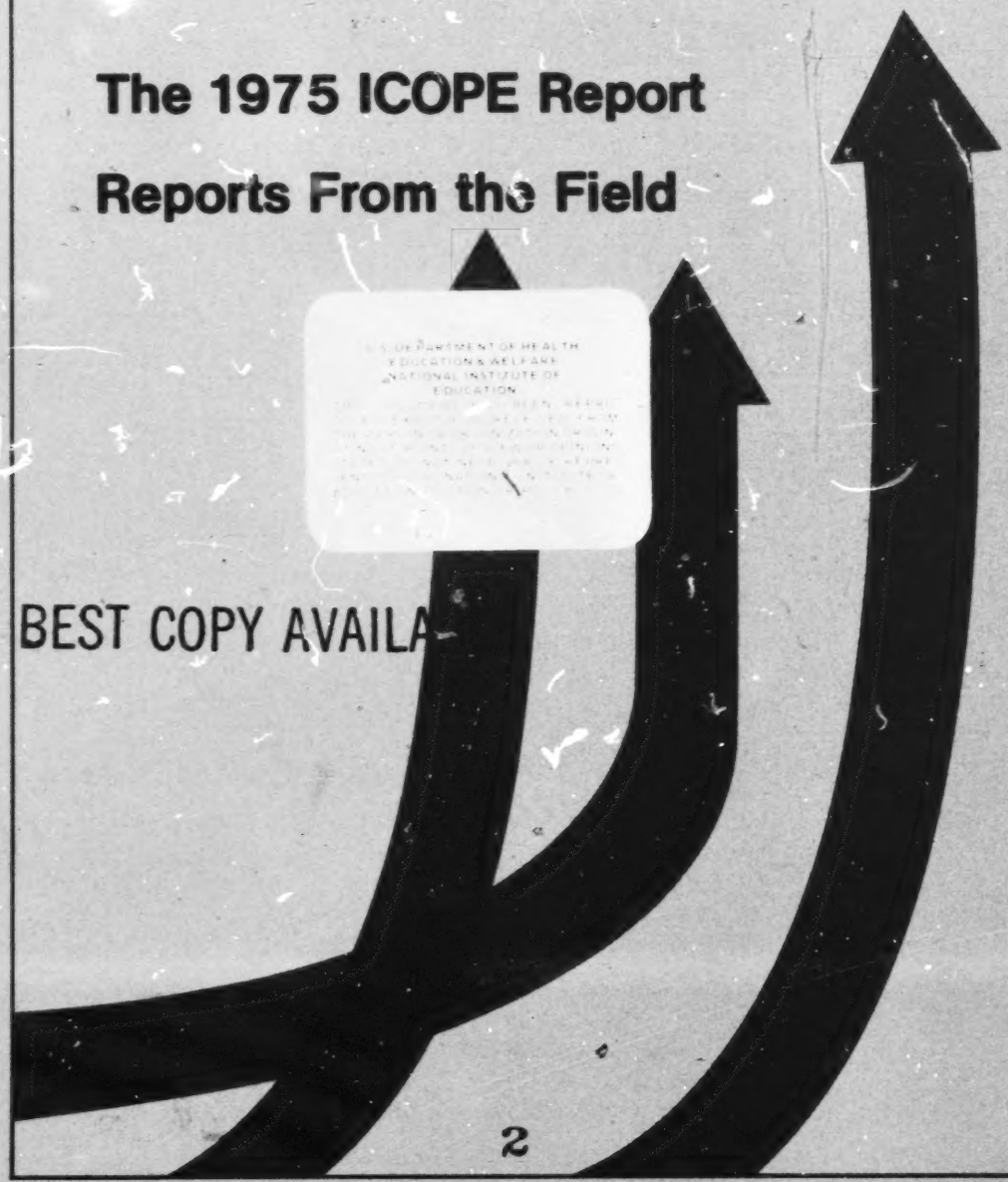
No. 12

THE GROWTH OF ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The 1975 ICOPE Report

Reports From the Field



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Options in Public Education

EA 007 023

The Growth of Alternative Public Schools: The 1975 ICOPE Report

by Robert D. Barr

International Consortium on Options in Public Education has just completed a comprehensive Directory of alternative Public Schools. This Directory includes all schools previously listed in Changing Schools, plus schools listed in a number of other state, regional and national directories. The following article is based on information found in the 1975 ICOPE Directory. Because of its length, Changing Schools will be unable to publish this list in the newsletter. You may obtain the complete mimeographed list from ICOPE for $2.00. Please use the coupon on the last page.

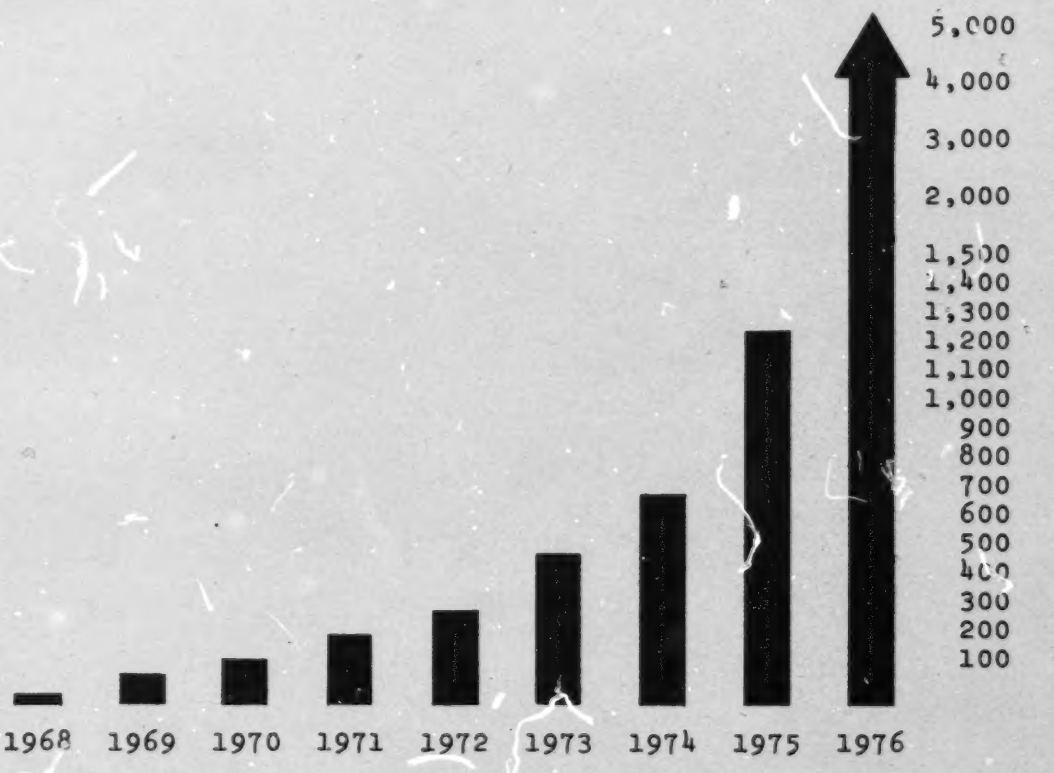
During the last five years, the development of optional alternative schools has emerged as a major new development in public education in the United States. Mario Fantini has called it the "only major movement now occurring in public education," and even from a conservative estimate the growth has been quite spectacular. Before 1969, there were fewer than 25 alternative public schools in operation in the United States, and they were largely overlooked by the education media. At that time no book had been written on the topic, professional organizations and publications seemed unaware of them, and there were no federal programs designed to encourage or support their development. Yet isolated and alone, a few communities were simultaneously beginning to explore a distinctly different approach to education renewal. It was the beginning of one of the few grass root movements ever to occur in American Education.

Since the International Consortium on Options in Education was first organized, a continuing effort has been underway to document the growth of Alternatives by identifying schools being planned and in operation in the United States and throughout the world. In the fall of 1973, the first report of this effort was made public in a Directory of Alternative Public Schools (*Changing Schools* No. 008). At that time, 464 alternative public schools had been identified in 35 different states and five countries, with 75% of the schools being found in eight states. Over 40% of the alternative schools were found in California, Washington, and New York. In the spring of 1974, a Directory Supplement was published (*Changing Schools* No. 009) that listed 120 additional schools.

During the last year the number of alternative schools that have been identified has more than doubled. *The most recent listing includes a cumulative total of 1250 alternative public schools now in operation. Even this number is a con-*

servative estimate of alternative schools due to the limitations of data gathering techniques. Lacking the resources for a systematic national survey, the ICOPE list of alternative public schools has been based on information gathered at regional conferences, from news items, through correspondence, and from regional and state directories. *When these limitations are taken into consideration along with schools now being planned, the number of alternative schools in operation by September, 1975 may well be as high as 5,000.* Such numbers suggest that the most far reaching experimentation and innovation to ever occur in public education is now underway. When compared to other major movements in public education - progressive schools, Eight Year Study schools, performance contract schools, Trump's Model Schools, the Ford Foundation's Experimental Schools, or even the free school movement outside public education; there has never been anything like it.

Growth of Alternative Public Schools 1968 - 1975



What is even more significant, is the fact that this vast experimentation is occurring during one of the most difficult periods that public education has ever faced. School districts throughout the country are currently confronted with declining enrollments, escalating inflationary cost, and shrinking tax dollars. While school districts are

eliminating high school athletic programs, reducing music and art programs, terminating support services and personnel, enlarging average class size, and closing schools; communities continue to initiate new alternative schools in increasing numbers. Such a situation helps to demonstrate the importance and viability of optional alternative programs in public schools. Locally initiated and controlled, and almost always financed by per pupil cost from local tax funds, public schools in nearly every state in the nation have begun to diversify their programs and offer parents, teachers and students a variety of educational options and freedom of choice.

The rapid growth of alternative public schools has been especially dramatic in a number of states. In 1970, there were no alternative schools in the state of Indiana. In 1973, there were five; today there are alternatives in operation in 15 school districts with others being planned in five new districts. In 1970, Michigan had only a few isolated drop-out centers, and these were often only "quasi" alternatives. By 1973, there were 32 alternative schools in operation, today over 50 have been identified. A year ago, 106 schools were identified in California, today over 350 have been documented. During the last year a number of other states have experienced a similar growth rate. In one year, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, New York, Ohio, Oregon and Texas tripled their number of alternative schools, with other states even demonstrating larger increases.

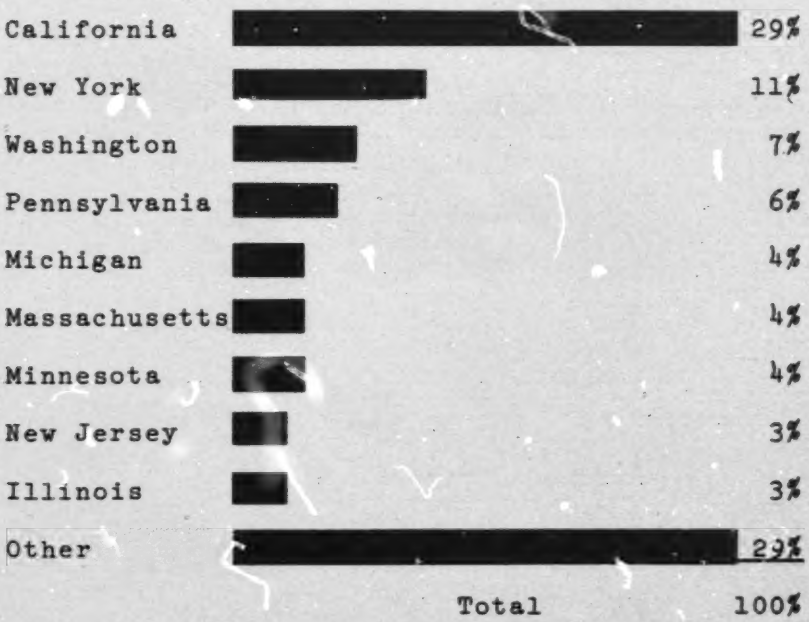
The following chart indicates this growth in selected states:

	Fall, 1973	Spring, 1975
California	106	355
Colorado	6	20
Connecticut	6	23
Illinois	24	37
Indiana	5	15
Massachusetts	34	48
Michigan	32	54
Mississippi	24	46
New Jersey	5	38
New York	59	129
Ohio	7	23
Oregon	5	18
Pennsylvania	39	68
Texas	4	13
Washington	60	86
Washington, D.C.	2	25
Wisconsin	9	46

While the growth of alternative public schools has shifted to some extent to new states, the vast majority of alternatives

are still clustered in a few states. Over 70% of all alternative schools identified were found in nine states, with California still having the largest number.

Distributions of Alternative Public Schools by States



Reasons For Growth

While the primary reasons for the rapid and continuing growth of alternative schools lies in the unique strategic advantages in dealing with local school needs, a number of important reasons can be identified that have encouraged this growth.

1. Publications: During the last five years the concept of alternative schools has been popularized and legitimized, explained and discussed in a wide variety of educational publications. Over 200 articles and books on alternative public schools have been published since 1970. A large number of educational associations have focused a special issue of their professional journals on the topic, and even *Time* and *Newsweek* have had feature stories on alternatives. (For a complete bibliography, see *Changing Schools* No. C11)

2. Professional Recommendations: The concept of alternative schools has been endorsed and recommended by nearly every professional association and by an impressive number of national committees, and commissions. As early as 1970, the White House Conferences on Children called for alternative

schools; more recently the last four national reports in education have also called for alternatives. The *Greening of the High School,*[1] the *Reform of Secondary Education,*[2] the *Report of the National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education,*[3] and the new Coleman Report, *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*[4] have all indicated the need for alternative schools, settings and programs.

3. Accreditation Procedures: The North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools became the first accrediting agency to recognize the development of optional alternative schools. North Central has now developed evaluation criteria for optional public schools.[5]

4. State Departments of Education: A growing number of state departments of education have worked to encourage the development of Alternative Schools. A number of state departments have held or co-sponsored conferences on schools, permitted school districts a degree of freedom and flexibility in implementing equivalent ways of meeting graduating requirements, and a few states have even developed optional graduation requirements. Washington has developed graduation requirements that not only provide for more flexible procedures for graduation, they also state "alternative learning experiences should be provided for each student in each subject area." State Departments in Illinois, California, Florida, Indiana, New Jersey, New York and Michigan have also actively encouraged the exploration and development of optional public schools.

5. Mandated Optional Schools: East Lansing, Michigan, became the first school district in the United States to drop

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1 Ruth Weinstock, *The Greening of the High School* (New York: Education Facilities Laboratories, 1973).

2 B. Frank Brown, Chairman, *The Reform of Secondary Education,* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973).

3 John Henry Martin, Chairman, *Report of the National Panel on High School Adolescent Education* (Unpublished Review Draft.)

4 James S. Coleman, Chairman, *Youth: Transition to Adulthood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

5 *Policies and Standards for the Approval of Optional School and Special Function Schools, 1974-75,* North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Chicago, Illinois.

geographic boundaries for school attendance, and offer students and parents the opportunity to choose any elementary school in the district, thus mandating that all the schools in the district would become alternatives. The Minneapolis Board of Education has also voted that by 1976, all elementary schools will become optional. California has become the first state to legislate alternatives, by requiring that all districts have continuation schools available to their constituents.

6. Federal and Foundation Support: While most alternative schools continue to be financed with local tax dollars via per pupil cost, a number of schools have been initiated with the help of external funds. Many alternatives have been supported through ESEA Titles I and III of the Office of Education. The Experimental Schools Program of the National Institute for Education has provided funds for the development of alternative schools in Berkeley, California, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Federal Government is also sponsoring a voucher education experiment in Alum Rock, California. A number of other alternative schools have gained start-up funds from local foundations in their own area. The Brown Foundation has funded alternatives in Louisville, Kentucky, the Mott Foundation has supported alternatives in Flint, Michigan, the Johnson Foundation has supported alternatives in Racine, Wisconsin, and the Lilly Endowment has assisted new alternatives in Indianapolis.

7. Technical Assistance: Schools have also been assisted in the development of alternative schools by a variety of organizations, agencies, and institutions. ICOPE, located at Indiana University, has held one International Convention, three National Invitational Conferences, 25 Regional Conferences, and has provided direct technical assistance to hundreds of public school districts during the past 4 years. A second International Conference is planned for October, 1975 in Pasadena (see announcement in this issue). The National Alternative Schools Project at the University of Massachusetts has likewise provided technical assistance to schools in the development of alternatives, as has the Center for New Schools in Chicago.

8. Teacher Education Programs: Following the lead of Indiana University and the University of Massachusetts, a number of colleges and universities are now planning programs designed to prepare teachers for the new roles emerging in alternative schools. Such programs are helping to provide public schools with a growing number of certified teachers with experiences and training in the area of alternative education.

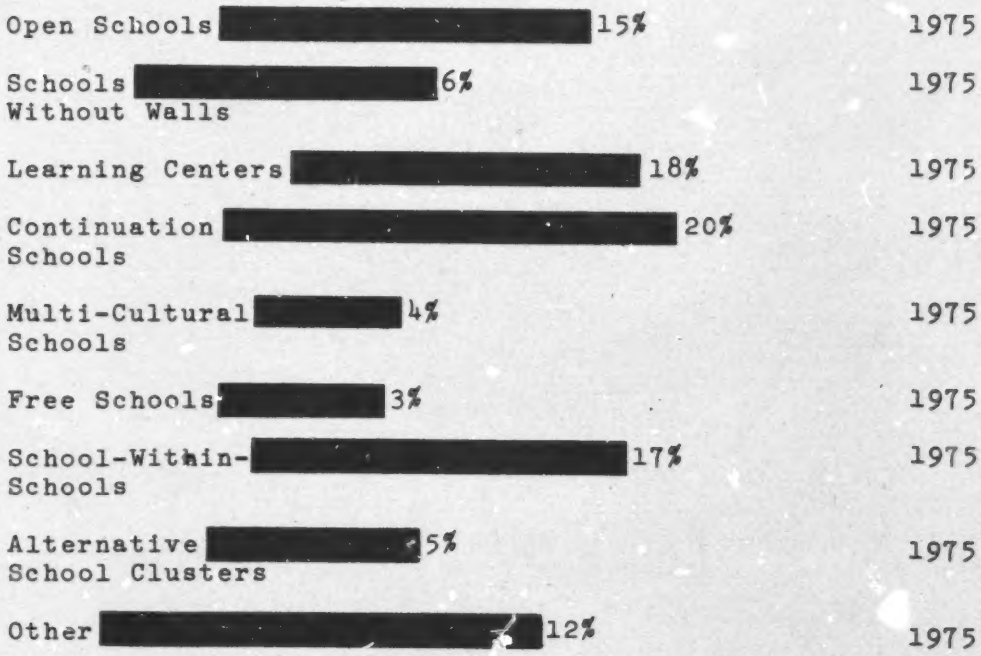
All of the above efforts have helped to encourage the development of alternative schools and likewise occurred as a result of continuing developments in this area. They have also helped to change the perception of alternative schools. *Four years ago, the concept of alternative public schools was*

viewed as a "radical idea." Slowly during the last few years this perception has changed to one of "provocative interest." Finally today, it is viewed by most as a conservative response to local problems or needs. Once a volatile political issue between local advocates, increasingly school boards and school superintendents are simply saying "We need alternatives in our district" and finding little resistance to the idea.

The most recent listing of alternative public schools by ICOPE has revealed a shift in the types of alternative schools that have been developed during the last 18 months. In the fall of 1973, the majority of schools consisted of Schools-Without-Walls (22%), Continuation Schools (21%), Open Schools (20%) and Learning Centers (18%), with Multi-Cultural Schools, Free Schools, and Schools-Within-Schools combining for another 20%. In 1975, the most significant change seems to have occurred in the area of open schools and schools-without-walls. Each of these areas now represents a much smaller percent of the total number of alternative schools in operation, open schools dropping from 20% in 1973 to 15% in 1975, and schools-without-walls dropping from 22% to a low of 6%. Both Learning Centers and Continuation Schools maintained approximately the same overall percentages in 1975 that they did in 1973. In order to maintain these similar percentages, both Learning Centers and Continuation Schools demonstrated a sizable increase in their overall total numbers of schools. The primary reason for the increase in Continuation Schools was the California law requiring all school districts to provide such options. The continued increase of Learning Centers is particularly interesting, for this development has helped to defuse political opposition to alternative schools. While communities have often had bitter controversies over the development of Free Schools, Open Schools, and other more exotic programs, there seems to be little hostility over the development of something called a learning center. Free Schools slipped from 5% down to 3%, and Multi-Cultural Schools contined to account for 4% of the total number of alternatives.

While most alternative schools continue to be housed in their own separate facility, the biggest increase percentage rise was in the area of schools-within-schools, which increased from 10% in 1973 to 17% in 1975. There were also new categories of schools found. Five percent of the total alternative schools in operation today are alternative school clusters. These "clusters" of alternatives were previously single schools that were reorganized around a number of optional programs. Two of the most familiar such schools are Quincy, Illinois and Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

Comparisons of
Type of Alternative Public Schools 1975


Open Schools 15% 1975
Schools Without Walls 6% 1975
Learning Centers 18% 1975
Continuation Schools 20% 1975
Multi-Cultural Schools 4% 1975
Free Schools 3% 1975
School-Within-Schools 17% 1975
Alternative School Clusters 5% 1975
Other 12% 1975

Twelve percent of the total were categorized as "other" because they fell in the area of "too-tough-to-type." Often these schools have taken ideas from several of the other types and are in fact composites of all the rest. There were also many schools placed in the "other" category simply because there was not enough information available to accurately "type" the school.

One other point should be noted. A recent issue of *Newsweek* (October 21, 1974) featured an article on alternative schools that maintained that a backlash against "open" types of education was occurring in the form of a "back to basics" fundamentalism. The article, the longest ever published in *Newsweek* on education, suggested that a wave of Fundamental Schools were being developed that rigorously taught the basic subjects, maintained firm discipline, and encouraged patriotism. The *Newsweek* article has been widely quoted and even reprinted in *Readers Digest*. If such a "back to basics" movement is occurring, ICOPE has been unable to locate it. Only four such schools have been identified in the United States, with two other school districts considering such proposals. A recent survey by *Nations Schools* also failed to find additional fundamental schools. *Out of the 1250 schools that ICOPE has identified, four fundamental schools can hardly be interpreted as a back-lash movement or even as a trend.*

The most recent ICOPE list of alternative schools reveals another interesting development. In many school districts where alternatives have been created, a second generation of alternatives have occurred as alternatives have developed to alternatives. In some school districts, this occurs through the development of a second or third alternative, in others, this "ripple effect" is demonstrated by a continuing development of new schools.

The following is a list of school districts which have developed several alternative schools. Districts with more than 20 alternative schools include: Berkeley, California; New York City, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Districts with more than 10 alternative schools: Los Angeles, California; San Francisco, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Seattle, Washington.

Special thanks to: barbara Bontempo, who has worked for the last year compiling the ICOPE Directory and summarizing information for this article.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

From: California

You wonder about the status of alternatives in California? We have a little bit of a lot of things, and a lot of some things--work experience, continuation high schools, opportunity schools, regional occupational programs and centers. We have alternatives that have been operating for many, many years (continuation high school since 1917) and we have projects in the planning stage. A community services learning center, combining and integrating social service agencies, community service facilities, instructional, vocational training, cultural and recreational programs, has just been approved by a southern California district governing board.

A statewide survey of alternative schools and programs was recently completed by the State Department of Education. Collected data is indicative of a growing interest in and the development of optional programs as a means of meeting the individual and community needs of the state's diverse population. The California survey results are congruent with nationwide data collected by ICOPE in that the greatest number of alternatives are found at the secondary level and are in the School Within a School and Continuation School categories. A total of 243 schools listed in a California directory of alternatives had met the necessary requirement of completing and returning the survey form by the deadline date, and met the criteria set out in our definition of alternative school or program.

The continuation high school, a mandated program possibly unique to California, has, in some instances, had a negative connotation in the eyes of many parents, educators, and students who have regarded it as a last resort for problem youths. The number of continuation high schools enrolling students on a personal choice basis, as opposed to admitting only those being assigned, roughly equals the number of SWAS reported in the survey. The growing practice of voluntary enrollment in continuation high school is graduatlly changing its image to an alternative which more adequately serves some students whose needs were not being met in the comprehensive high school.

Open schools, pregnancy-maternity centers as an alternative to the regular school, and multicultural/bilingual/ethnic schools were next most frequently represented. Extended day high schools and K-12 schools are showing up in limited numbers.

There are options included in the directory. Other optional programs include work experience, career exploration, community classrooms, regional occupational programs and centers. Regional occupational programs and centers are another effort possibly unique to California and developing rapidly. These are most nearly identified with learning centers or skills centers, in terminology more familiar to alternative educators.

What is the projected picture for the development of alternatives in the California public education system? Three sources of influence for continued development include:

local commitment, as control is with the local governing board,

legislative mandate, and

State Department of Education leadership and promotion.

To date, local support has been spotty and relatively sparse. Significant legislation specific to alternative schools, although initiated, has not been signed by the former governor. The steady rate of growth of alternatives, in California in light of the "support of concept" but little to no promotional and developmental effort at the State level, appears significant.

Further, in the summer of 1974, State Superintendent Wilson Riles embarked upon a major thrust of his second term by appointing the Commission for the Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education. This Commission, an august group representative of California's diverse population, is made up of business, industry, and labor leaders, professional organ-

ization members, educators, and students. It was charged with the task of assessing the situation, gathering data, and recommending what ought to be happening in California's secondary schools (grades 7-12) to make them more adaptable and responsive to the individual and the community which they serve.

It is anticipated that the recommendations of the Commission, which point toward strong support of the concept of multiple options within the public education system, will have the necessary impact on the public and the Legislature to ensure the means by which reform can be implemented on a broad scale. If the anticipation becomes fact, Californians can look forward as Richard L. Foster, former Superintendent, Berkeley Unified School District says, to "public education evolving from a system of schools to a network of options..."

Ginna Brock
California State Department of Education

From: Colorado

"Colorado, which has been in the forefront of innovation in education, is moving into the area of Alternative Programs with vigor. A committee was recently formed that represented State Department of Education and the Denver Area School Superintendents' Council to act as a clearinghouse on alternative programs, encourage districts to provide optional programs in their schools, and to provide consultative services to districts considering development of optional programs.

The committee is comprised of the heads of more than 20 alternative programs already extant in the Greater Denver area. The movment towards options is moving well in the Gateway to the West."

Don Merrill, Principal
Aurora Public Schools

From: Massachusetts

The trend in this part of the country is still an upward one, or at least holding its own during a time of severe economy. The Cambridge school system has introduced a third high school alternative program; the impetus for this new program was provided by students and parents who were not selected in the lottery drawing for the Pilot School. At budget time it appears that all of the alternative programs in Cambridge will not only survive but will expand. Alternative programs in suburban Boston have also benefited

from the implementation of various metropolitan curricula programs, and for these programs the resources of urban schools and students have helped with their concerns of racial and social isolation.

One positive outgrowth of the desegregation problems that the Boston school system has experienced is the renewed interest in the development of magnet alternative schools (with the corresponding possibility of state funding). During recent months regional interest groups have held meetings concerning: the development and networking of magnet alternative schools; summary of alternative school resources and listing of "promising practice" programs (Institute for Responsive Education, Boston University); and, lastly, resource-sharing and communication among local area public and provate alternative schools.

Ray F. Shurtleff, Dean
Cambridge Pilot School

From: South Carolina

Over the past year the interest in Alternative Education in the Southeast has increased tremendously. I wish I could report most of this interest was directed toward providing positive, viable learning options for students, teachers and parents. However, in too many cases educators in our area have used the concept of Alternative Schools to set up and promote "discipline schools" that are even more restrictive and closed than conventional schools. It is my judgment that this is a dangerous misuse of the whole idea of providing learning options; especially so when students are assigned to these schools without choice.

There are legitimate alternative public schools in our area where people are really working hard to open up various learning options. These schools for the most part have a firm base (financially and educationally) and I believe are here to stay. Every state within our area has at least one viable alternative public school. One particular trend I've noticed over the past six months is that of parents of elementary students going to principals, superintendents, and school boards and pushing for curricular/structural options within specific elementary school programs. It seems that the parents of elementary age students are more willing to take the initiative and push for needed changes.

I'm still optimistic and look forward to continuing developments in our area.

William L. Howell, Director
Columbia Walk-In School

From: Washinton

Alternative education is alive and well in the Pacific Northwest. The number of schools and programs continues to grow, but as usual we are plagued with a lack of coordination and information about who's doing what where. A regional consortium of public alternatives has recently been established in the Seattle metropolitan area, with 19 of 21 school districts participating. The potential for a regional interstate network of alternatives (e.g., Seattle-Portland-Vancouver, B.C.) is great, but nothing except an idea exists so far.

From a program standpoint, two trends increasingly clear. Structurally, the school-within-a-school approach predominates. This juxtapostion of an alternative side by with the regular program is probably the most direct strategy for opening up the system; however, it usually entails heavy strain on all concerned. Admittedly, though, from a standpoint of administrative feasibility, cost, and space utilization it has substantial appeal to many systems. Programmatically, the second trend is toward the learning approach usually characterized as "open" learning. I don't exactly know what that means, but it appears to be one step removed from a "free school," whatever that is. Suffice it to say, there is continued growth and variety in alternative programs throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Mike Hickey
Associate Superintendent
Seattle Public Schools

From: Michigan

Things are happening. There are about 25 to 30 alternative and optional programs in the metropolitan Detroit area, including Ann Arbor. These programs include "open school" programs, regional middle schools (grades 5-8) in Detroit, a school-without-walls in Ann Arbor, and a variety of other high school alternative programs. All are available to students as programs of choice. Several local school districts in Wayne County (which includes Detroit) are adopting open enrollment policies which allow students to opt into other than attendance area schools in a local school district where space permits. At least three of the larger surburban school districts in this area are moving in the direction of developing a system-wide process to elicit optional and alternative programs within individual schools and within the district. A network organization -- Wayne Educational Options -- has been organized this past year. The 125 members include parents, teachers, principals, curriculum directors, and superintendents in the larger metropolitan area. Members issue a newsletter, hold regular meetings, sponsored a Conference on Educational Alternatives (jointly with ICOPE),

and are exploring a variety of ways of helping each other and of developing general support for options and alternatives. The Wayne County Intermediate School District which provides consultative services to the 36 local districts in Wayne County (including Detroit) has assigned a curriculum consultant the task of "helping stimulate and develop optional and alternative programs in Wayne County Public Schools."

Dolores Paskal, Wayne County
Michigan Intermediate School District

From: Kansas

Alternative schools in the Wichita area are "growing." An alternative program for junior high school students was initiated in January, 1975 in Wichita. Plans for an alternative elementary program to begin in the fall of 1975 are under way. With these two additional ventures, the Wichita schools will provide alternative programs at all grade levels. There is a marked increase in alternative schools throughout the state, as well. Topeka, Leavenworth, Newton, Emporia and Lawrence all have some options at public expense now. Several other districts are investigating the possibility of adding such programs in the near future.

Jane C. Ware, Principal Metropolitan
Program Center, Wichita Public Schools

From: Connecticut

There is vigorous growth in Alternative Schooling in Connecticut. Both Shanti and S.A.N.D. are healthy and working well. The West Hartford Community School has tripled its off-campus internship enrollment and greatly expanded its program. The East Hartford and Park City (Bridgeport) Alternative Schools are flourishing in their second year of operation. New Haven's School in the Community (over 300 members) and Middletown's School Within a School continue program growth in their fifth year. The New Haven Regional Arts Alternative is off to an exciting start. 1975 will see the genesis of new programs. Hartford will initiate a regional arts alternative and bilingual high school. The Hartford Board of Education expects to hire an assistant superintendent for alternatives whose first job will be to start a K-12 school modeled on St. Paul Open School. Planning committees are in preparatory stages in Wethersfield, Bloomfield, New Britain, Waterford, Nonewaug Region, Greenwich, and Stamford.

Gene Mulcahy, Shanti School, Hartford

1975 ALTERNATIVE DIRECTORY

The 1975 Directory of Alternative Schools, which lists the names and addresses of over 1,200 operating schools, is now available. Please send me ___ copy/copies of the 1975 Directory at $2.00 per copy. Enclosed is a check for $_____.

Name _____
Address _____
_____ Zip _____

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*Alternative Public Schools

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Published by the Center for Options in Public Education, Indiana University, in cooperation with the International Consortium for Options in Public Education.

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